

## ENR 1.2 Visual Flight Rules

### 1. General

Visual Flight Rules are prescribed in the Irish Aviation Authority (Rules of the Air) Order, 2004.

### 2. Rule 34. General Rules for VFR flights

#### 2.1. Classification of airspace

Except when operating as a special VFR flight, VFR flights shall be conducted so that the aircraft is flown in conditions of visibility and distance from clouds equal to or greater than those specified in the following table:

<sup>1)</sup> Airspace class	A <sup>2)</sup> BCDE	FG	FG
		Above 900 metres (3,000 ft) AMSL or above 300 metres (1,000 ft) above terrain whichever is the higher	At and below 900 metres (3,000 ft) AMSL or 300 metres (1,000 ft) above terrain whichever is the higher
Distance from Cloud	1,500 metres horizontally 300 metres (1,000 ft) vertically		Clear of cloud and in sight of the surface
Flight Visibility	8 Kilometres at or above Flight Level 100 or 10,000 ft AMSL 5 Kilometres below Flight Level 100 or 10,000 ft AMSL		5 Kilometres <sup>3)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> See Rule 26 of these Rules

<sup>2)</sup> VMC minima in Class A airspace are included for guidance to pilots but do not imply the acceptance by the ATS Unit responsible of a VFR flight in Class A airspace in a particular instance;

- <sup>3)</sup>
- a) 3 kms, flight Visibility for aircraft operated at an indicated airspeed of 140 kts or less
  - b) lower flight visibilities to a minimum of 1500m may be permitted for aircraft operating:
    - 1) at speeds that, in the prevailing visibility will give adequate opportunity to observe other traffic or any obstacles in time to avoid collision, or
    - 2) in circumstances in which the probability of encounters with other traffic would normally be low, e.g. in areas of low volume traffic and for aerial work at low level;
  - c) A helicopter may be permitted to operate in less than 1500m flight visibility where a lower flight visibility is prescribed by the Authority, if manoeuvred at a speed that will give adequate opportunity to observe other traffic or any obstacles in time to avoid collision.

#### 2.2. Helicopter Operations

If the aircraft is a helicopter operating in class G airspace it may, unless otherwise prescribed, be flown below 300 metres (1,000 ft), but not below 150 metres (500 ft), above terrain or water in a flight visibility of not less than 1,000 metres, or such lesser visibility as may be prescribed by the Authority, and in such case shall remain clear of cloud and in sight of the surface and shall be manoeuvred at a speed which would give the pilot-in-command adequate opportunity to observe other traffic or any obstruction in good time to avoid collision.

2.3. When within a control zone, an aircraft may be operated as and in meteorological conditions appropriate to a special VFR flight provided that the flight may be conducted in accordance with Rule 3 of these Rules.

2.4. In this Rule, a special VFR flight means a controlled flight authorised by the appropriate air traffic control unit to operate within a control zone:

- 2.4.1. by day, in meteorological conditions which are lower than the Visual Meteorological Conditions but with a flight visibility not less than 1500m and clear of clouds and in sight of the surface, except in the case of a helicopter operating in accordance with Rule 3(2)(b) of these rules along a prescribed route or

within a prescribed area where such are prescribed and where lower limits are prescribed relating thereto; 51

- 2.4.2. by night, in Visual Meteorological Conditions and in sight of the surface.
- 2.5. At an aerodrome within a control zone, special VFR flights shall not be authorised to land,, take off, depart, cross the control zone or operate locally therein if the ground visibility within the control zone is less than 1500m and/or the reported cloud ceiling is less than 500 feet, except in the case of a helicopter operating in accordance with Rule 3(2)(b) of these rules, along a prescribed route or within a prescribed area where lower limits are prescribed.
- 2.6. Except when a special VFR clearance is obtained from an air traffic control unit, VFR flights shall not take-off or land at an aerodrome within a control zone or enter the aerodrome traffic zone or traffic pattern:
  - 2.6.1. when the ceiling is less than 450 metres (1,500 ft); or
  - 2.6.2. when the ground visibility is less than 5 km.
- 2.7. Except where otherwise indicated in air traffic control clearances or specified by the appropriate ATS authority, VFR flights in level cruising flight when operated above 900 metres (3,000 ft) above the ground or water, or a higher datum as specified by the appropriate ATS authority, shall be conducted at a flight level appropriate to the track as specified in the table of cruising levels in Rule 4 of these Rules.
- 2.8. VFR Flights at Night
  - 2.8.1. VFR flights at night operated in a control zone shall be operated as special VFR flights subject to a clearance from the air traffic control unit responsible for that zone and elsewhere in accordance with the conditions prescribed by the Authority or, in any other state, the appropriate ATS authority;
  - 2.8.2. Special VFR flights at night authorised in a control zone may only operate to or from aerodromes or heliports suitably equipped for night operations;
  - 2.8.3. Flights by night outside a control zone shall be operated as IFR flights in accordance with Part IV of the Rules in this Order unless otherwise prescribed or authorised by the Authority.
- 2.9. Unless authorised by the appropriate ATS authority, VFR flights shall not be operated:
  - 2.9.1. above FL200;
  - 2.9.2. at transonic and supersonic speeds.
- 2.10. VFR flights which are operated within Classes B, C, and D airspace or as special VFR flights shall comply with the provisions of Rules 27 to 31.
- 2.11. A VFR flight operating within or into areas, or along routes, designated by the appropriate ATS authority in accordance with Rule 23 paragraph (2)(c) or (d), shall maintain continuous listening watch on the appropriate radio frequency of, and report its position as necessary to, the air traffic services unit providing flight information service.

**3. Rule 35. Change from VFR to IFR flight**

An aircraft operated in accordance with the Visual Flight Rules which wishes to change to compliance with the Instrument Flight Rules shall:

- 3.1. if a flight plan was submitted, inform the appropriate air traffic services unit of the necessary changes to be effected to its current flight plan, or
- 3.2. when so required by paragraph (2) of Rule 23 submit a flight plan to the appropriate air traffic services unit and obtain a clearance prior to proceeding in accordance with the Instrument Flight Rules when in controlled airspace.

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